15 October 2013 - The Met Office is helping Sainsbury's keep their shelves stocked this winter, having been awarded a new contract to supply specialist weather services.

Weather is a significant driving force behind consumer purchasing behaviour, affecting what people buy, when, where and how much. In order to maximise customer satisfaction and minimise waste it is vital that Sainsbury's stock the right goods, in the right quantities at the right time.

Accurate and reliable Met Office forecasts and advice help Sainsbury's make informed ordering decisions meaning they can plan for fluctuations in demand due to the weather both in the short- and long-term.

Karen Whitworth, Director of Supply Chain at Sainsbury's, said: "We really appreciate the value-added services the Met Office provides. Their forecasting services have given us the confidence that we need to make better ordering decisions." Sainsbury's serves 23 million customers a week* and planning for and managing the impacts of weather is one of its many challenges.

Met Office forecasters have spent time with teams from Sainsbury's in order to fully understand the types of decisions they have to make, from replenishment through to staffing levels.

Met Office Forecaster Alex Fox said: "We're really pleased to be working with Sainsbury's. By working so closely with them we've been able to refine the bespoke service we provide to ensure that they have the right information, at the right time in the right format. Accurate, timely weather information and advice has proved vital in assisting them to make the right operational decisions."

With this detailed understanding the Met Office has developed bespoke services that are helping Sainsbury's to stay one step ahead of the weather. This includes historic, observed and forecast information in the form of maps, tables, graphs and data. Conference calls between Met Office forecasters and Sainsbury's planning teams are held regularly and add further confidence to these decisions particularly over key trading periods and when weather breaches thresholds that lead to changes in customer buying behaviours.

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